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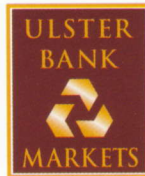


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KATYA KABANOVA

Dikoy, <i>a rich merchant</i>	Gerard O'Connor
Boris Grigorievich, <i>his nephew</i>	Leo Marian Vodička,
Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha), <i>a merchant's widow</i>	Janice Meyerson
Tikhon Kabanov, <i>her son</i>	Volker Vogel
Katya Kabanova, <i>his wife</i>	Franzita Whelan
Vanya Kudryash, <i>Dikoy's assistant</i>	William Saetre
Varvara, <i>foster child in the Kabanov home</i>	Sophie Pondjiclis
Kuligin, <i>a friend of Kudryash</i>	Martin Higgins
Glasha, <i>a servant</i>	Fiona Murphy
Feklusha, <i>a servant</i>	Paula Murrihy
Zena, <i>a village woman</i>	Sandra Gudgeon
A village man	Tom Cregan

Katya Kabanova was first performed at the National Theatre in Brno on 23 November 1921. The first Irish performance was at the Theatre Royal Wexford on 28 October 1972

<i>Répétiteur</i>	Dearbhla Collins
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FOR THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

KATYA KABANOVA

THE PLOT AT A GLANCE

The action takes place in the small town of Kalinov, on the banks of the Volga.

Act 1

Boris Grigoryevich tells his friend Kudryash that he is miserable. Not only is he unhappy working for his uncle, the rich merchant Dikoy, but he is in love with the unattainable Katya, wife of another merchant, Tikhon Kabanov. Katya enters with her husband and his formidable mother, the Kabanicha, who scolds her son for loving his wife more than his mother. She warns him that Katya will take a lover unless he keeps her on a tighter rein. Katya, too, is miserable. She is oppressed by her mother-in-law's tyranny and upset that her husband refuses to take her on a business trip he is about to undertake. She begs him to command her to remain faithful during his absence. He refuses to do what she asks, but does so when his mother orders him to lay down those precise instructions. There is a further confrontation between mother and son before Tikhon finally leaves.

Act 2

Varvara, a ward in the Kabanov household, gives Katya the key to the garden where, after much hesitation and filled with foreboding, she agrees to meet Boris that evening. Kabanicha entertains her crony Dikoy. He is more than a little inebriated and insists on confessing to her matters concerning his strange behavioural patterns.

Kudryash, waiting for Varvara in the garden, is surprised to meet Boris. When the women arrive, Kudryash and Varvara run off happily, leaving Boris and Katya by themselves. Katya is silent at first, but eventually allows herself to declare her love for Boris. They embrace passionately and swear eternal fidelity.

Act 3

Two weeks later. Tikhon returns and Katya, tormented by remorse, interprets the approach of a storm as a warning from Heaven. At the height of the storm, she confesses everything to her husband and his mother. Then, after bidding farewell to Boris, she throws herself into the Volga. Kabanicha coldly accepts the neighbours' condolences as Katya's corpse is laid out on the ground.



THE CEREMONY OF INNOCENCE

Whether it is read as a political allegory of Tsarist Russia or as an *histoire intime* of tragically disabled feeling, *Katya Kabanova* is an opera about the inner claims of love. When these claims are brutalised by the social conditions which at once stimulate and repress them, the result is crisis and death. If Janáček's opera engages with the larger themes of social revolution and change, if it is in part an incisive and devastating critique of autocracy, the work nevertheless attains to greatness because of its searing portrait of personal distress.

Max Brod, who translated the libretto into German, was firmly committed to a

political reading of the work, although he conceded that Katya's personal tragedy lay at its centre. Janáček himself was explicit about the inspiration for the opera, which derived from his love for Kamila Stösslová, an unrequited passion which nevertheless sustained him until his death in 1928. It is painful and poignant to contrast the frequency and dedication of his letters to her with the laconic brevity and neglect of her communications: 'Can't you even say *thank you* for *Katya*?' he wrote to her on 14 March 1922, having sent her the score, which he dedicated to her. Her disjointed reply, asking him to forgive her carelessness (she had misplaced her



note of acknowledgement), apostrophises the distance that lay between them. But however deplorable her failures in love, Kamila's presence in the operas, and especially in *Katya Kabanova*, is unmistakable testimony to the primary importance of personal feeling which suffused Janáček's musical imagination.

The opera is so richly layered in its engagement with feeling, with sexuality, with love, and with an atrophied condition of social malaise, that one is tempted to forget its obligations to the play which stands behind *Katya Kabanova*, namely, Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky's *The Storm* (also known as *The Thunderstorm*). *The Storm* was first given in Moscow in 1859: Janáček, a profound Russophile, knew Ostrovsky's works well, but did not begin to think seriously about

adapting this most famous of his plays (it attained classic status in pre-revolutionary Russia and maintained its place in the repertory under the Soviet regime) until 1918, when a Czech translation of the play was published. In preparing his own libretto – Janáček drew extensively on the Czech translation by Vincenc Cervinka – the composer found himself attracted to the 'ray of light' which briefly and tragically illuminates the realm of darkness which is the world of Ostrovsky's play. His brilliant re-structuring of the Russian original brought Ostrovsky's portrayal of the heroine into sharper focus, and it increased the headlong movement of Katya's downfall. But in reducing Ostrovsky's drama to its essentials, and in the complex essence of the drama, he simply left enough imaginative space for the music.



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Perhaps the most skilful features of Janáček's libretto are its subtle adjustment of character (especially in the matter of Katya's softer portrayal in the opera and Kabanicha's correspondingly more cruel demeanour) and its interpolation of set pieces (in the main, monologues for Katya) amidst the *verismo* exchanges which dominate the text. Janáček also underlines certain central pairings in the libretto which emphasise the isolation of Boris and Katya from everyone else in the drama: notably the pairings between Kabanicha and Dikoy, between Kabanicha and Katya, between Katya and Varvara, between Katya and her husband Tichon, and between Varvara and Kudryash. The device is a simple one, but by aligning and re-aligning Katya herself with the other characters, her crucial encounters with Boris are all the more deeply registered. She is the victim in every other pairing: the helpless prey of a sadistic mother-in-law; the innocent accomplice to Varvara's promiscuity and above all, perhaps, the misdirected, duty-bound spouse to her indecisive and fundamentally hopeless husband. Even her poetic diction is distinguished by registers of feeling and sensibility that proclaim her isolation: these compulsive disclosures and intimations remove her from the dreary heartland of cynical compromise which the opera so painfully evokes. Her redemptive moments of inner contemplation – revealed to an uncomprehending Varvara

– together with the anguished rapture of her exchanges with Boris, confirm her tragic incompatibility with the dark realm of Kalinov.

The oppressive impotence of Katya's world – or rather, the world she is forced to inhabit and then to abandon – is the primary motivating force which propels the action. Its ceremonies are time-honoured, humiliating and sadistic. Its moments of reprieve are couched in dissimulation and vaunted escape from the inevitable imprisonments of family life. Varvara's espousal of sexual freedom, for example, is inspired by the doomed foreknowledge of her absolute servitude upon marriage. The intrigues which she envisions and then enacts are certainly promiscuous, but they represent a desperate bid for freedom from that appalling enslavement which paralyses and bewilders Katya herself. Her impassioned address to Tichon at the end of the first scene of Act One ('How can she help it?/ First your mother picks on her, now you./You insist how much you love her,/Yet you stand there doing nothing!') is a clear recognition of that deadening tyranny which is built-in to the family structures that threaten everyone in the opera. The only alternative to this imprisonment of the spirit is deception and deceit.

For Katya, however, something else is required. She cannot fly past the ironclad net of her servitude, and the

humiliating directives which she endures at the hands of her mother-in-law are there to drive this home. In addition, her own painful sense of being otherwise before her marriage (faintly but unmistakably adumbrated in her opening gambit to Varvara: 'How is it people can't fly?'), prepares the mind for catastrophe. It is not merely that her sexual self-awareness is increased by the ineffectual presence of Tichon in her life, or that her gusts of spiritual ecstasy before marriage now represent themselves to her mind (and her astonished interlocutor) as a sensual invitation to break the sterile bonds of her vow to Tichon. It is that *no-one*, not even Boris, can properly understand her. She sometimes speaks, as it were, behind sound-proof glass. Her distress is comprehended, but not its source. Her violent repudiation of Boris, seconds after she recognizes him as the love which she seeks, intimates the impossible condition of her feeling. And when, in the third act, she re-encounters him and thereby affirms the hopelessness of their communion, the river beckons. Humiliated past endurance, a figure of unrelieved contempt and shame amongst the living, she can find consolation only in death.

The jeering savagery of Kabanicha is absolute: it represents the same brutal dictates that drive Boris to Siberia. So much in the opera other than Katya's presence seems to support this reading:

the deliberately disturbing juxtaposition of Varvara and Kudryash as they make love against the fragile ardour of Katya and Boris offstage; the obscene encounter between Kabanicha and Dikoj, with its overtones of sado-masochism and drunken abasement; the bustling household of women in the first act dominated by a matriarchal bully whose thirst for subjection ends only with Katya's death; the fruitless endeavours of a drunken husband whose ineffectual search for his wife is barely redeemed by the belated condemnation of his mother (a gesture which crowns his futile efforts), and, above all, the grandiloquent malevolence and self-congratulation which inform Kabanicha's final address to the people of the town.

Janáček's response to this material is of course the vital substance of interest: the opera not only gives life to Ostrovsky's drama in ways which the original text could not countenance, it also universalises the tragedy of Katya Kabanova so that its public and private origins are wholly transcended. Janáček's preoccupations with the rhythms and cadences of speech, so carefully transmuted in his earlier works by means of a technique which radically extends the boundaries of naturalism in opera, find their most compelling articulation in this work. In a

(right) *A real-life 'Katya':
Russian townswoman c.1911*



fundamental sense, *Katya Kabanova* is a vast meditation on the rival claims of sung dialogue and orchestral commentary: the miraculous admixture of these two is what gives the opera its expressive power. On one side, we find that the range of Janáček's vocal resource extends from metrical transformations of the natural stresses of Czech prose (allied to a lyric-declamatory discourse which is newly-conceived) to a melodic and tonal palette which integrates vocal register, harmonic colour and (sometimes folk-derived) rhythmic figures into an operatic discourse of absolute originality. On the other side, the striking independence of the orchestral writing makes claims of its own: on occasion, these claims can seem to contradict the visual and verbal communications of the text (as in the orchestral material which ushers in the Kabanova household in the first act, but which yet addresses itself to Katya, before she utters a word), and more generally, the web of motives,

themes, and textures which is woven through the texture of the score notably modifies and informs the exchanges conveyed by the text.

But it is the interdependence of orchestral and vocal resources, the technique by which they complement and counterpoint each other that is of supreme interest in this work: Even before the opera begins, the overture rehearses in brief the compelling contradictions of feeling of which the drama is made, but it does so by means of a transformation of themes, rather than by a literal adherence to Leitmotives. It is undoubtedly true that certain thematic gestures in the overture are unmistakable: the so-called 'fate' theme, for example, or the arresting tenderness of the music which is used to set Katya's opening address, but it is the transformation of such motives whereby they gain association with other characters that prefigures a much-employed technique in the opera itself.

Pre-Revolutionary Russian currency



It is this technique of transformation and association which takes precedence over the articulation of memorable ideas which occur or recur as the drama unfolds. Even Katya herself is characterised more typically by a specific type of music rather than by an unalterable series of motives. And when this technique attains a complexity that is not literally discernible but hidden, as when motives associated with Katya are pressed into orchestral service (and rhythmically distorted in the process) against the harsh, vocal dictates of her mother-in-law, we can recognize retrospectively that the language of the opera, its very discourse, is self-generating and transformative, rather than naively motivic.

Patterns of inflection and distortion modify not only the vocal writing and harmonic colour (most easily exemplified, perhaps, in the contrast between Katya's narrow intervals and the whole-tone harmonies of her strident adversary), but also the deployment and transformation of thematic ideas over a long period of time. The orchestral motive associated with Katya's first entrance, for example, and thereby associated with the essence of her personality, is transformed and disguised during Boris's narrative in the third act, and then finally re-emerges in its prime form as the purity of feeling between Katya and Boris reasserts itself. That this modulation is effected not

vocally, but orchestrally, is part of the interplay between word and motive that enriches the level of felt dramatic life in the opera. There are even moments when whole-tone colourings, explicitly associated with Kabanicha, allow her presence to infect, as it were, the integrity of Katya's music as she moves inexorably towards disaster and death.

In another opera preoccupied by the corrosive power of evil, *The Turn of the Screw*, the verbal climax of recognition is versed in the Governess's shrill perception that 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned'. She means that the natural purity of the two children in her care has been destroyed by her obsession with the ghost of Peter Quint. She also means that this obsession has corrupted and infected the little boy, Miles, in particular. It is an arresting phrase, 'the ceremony of innocence', and it seems to me that *Katya Kabanova* offers a definitive gloss as to its meaning. When Katya drowns in the Volga, her ceremony of innocence is at an end. But not quite. It requires the sententious evil of her mother-in-law to confirm the ascendancy of sensual power over Katya's gentle truth, even if it is the latter which abides and survives in the compelling memory of Janáček's opera.

(Harry White is Professor of Music at University College Dublin)



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JANÁČEK: A LATE STARTER

Leoš Janáček, who claimed that opera lay at the heart of his creative life, actually came late to the business of writing for the stage. He was already in his thirties when he composed his first opera *Sárka*, which was written in 1887-88 and revised in 1918-19 but not produced until 1925: and he was fifty when he wrote *Jenufa*, the work which eventually established his international reputation. *Katya Kabanova*, the sixth of his nine operas, didn't appear until 1921, when the composer was in his late sixties.

By this time, Janáček had long abandoned the style of his earlier, Smetana-influenced, number operas. His stage works were now noted for the individual way he used music to heighten dramatic impact. His distinctive compositional style was formed out of an amalgam of the characteristics of Moravian folk music and the inflexions of its dialects. Nature, too, had an input. Janáček had a keen ear for the sounds of the countryside and a deft facility with musical onomatopoeia. A fair example of this can be heard in the score of *Katya Kabanova*, where the underlying pulse of the music serves as a

constant reminder of the proximity of the mighty Volga river.

Janáček, who was one of the most important exponents of musical nationalism of the late 19th- and early 20th century, was born in 1854 in Hukvaldy in Moravia, which was then part of the Austrian Empire. His father was a choir master and as a boy he sang in the choir of the Augustinian church in Brno. After musical studies at the Prague, Leipzig, and Vienna conservatories, he founded a college of organists at Brno in 1881 which he directed until 1920. He directed the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra from 1881 to 1888 and in 1919 became Professor of Composition at the Prague Conservatory. His early compositions met with little success, but he became deeply involved in the study and collection of Moravian folk music and worked with fellow composer Jan Zdenek Bartos on editing, harmonising and performing the works collected.

After *Jenufa* and *Katya Kabanova*, Janáček's important operas are *The Makropulos Case* (1926), *From the House of the Dead* (1930),

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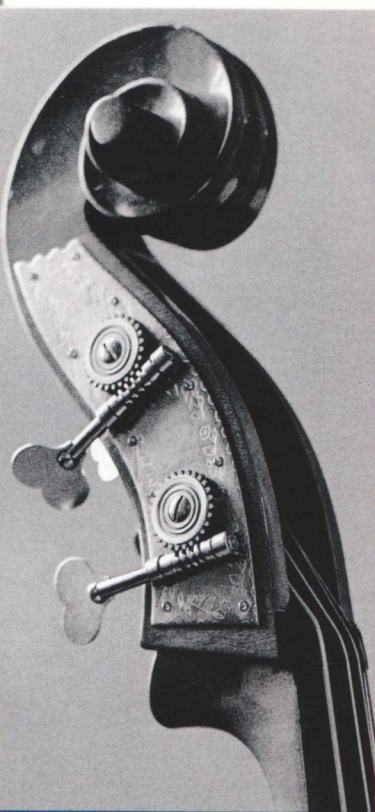


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the two one-act satirical operas *Mr. Broucek's Excursion to the Moon* and *Mr. Broucek's Excursion to the 15th Century*, both performed in Prague in 1920, and the comic opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1924). All of his operas are marked by a skilled use of music to heighten dramatic impact. His choral works also show his manner of modelling the writing for voices on the inflections of his native language, most significantly the *Glagolitic Mass* (1926). The Mass is written in the liturgical language, Old Slavonic, but because it uses instruments it cannot be performed in the Orthodox Church service. His song cycles *Diary of One Who Vanished* (1917-19) and *Nursery Rhymes* (1925-27)) are also notable.

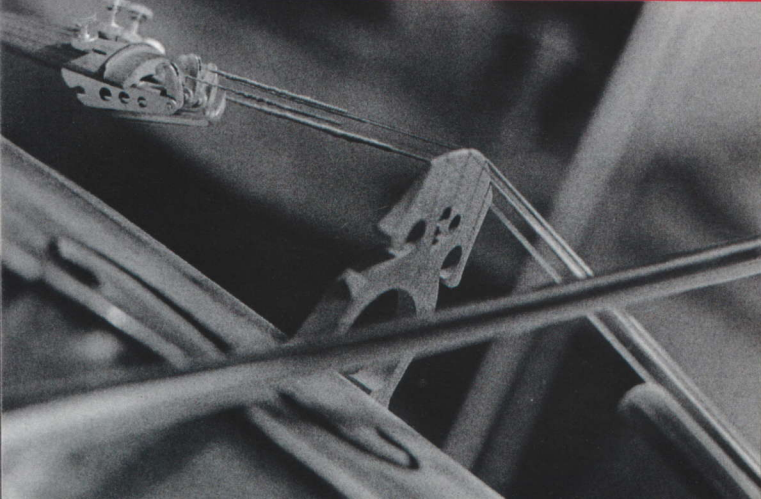
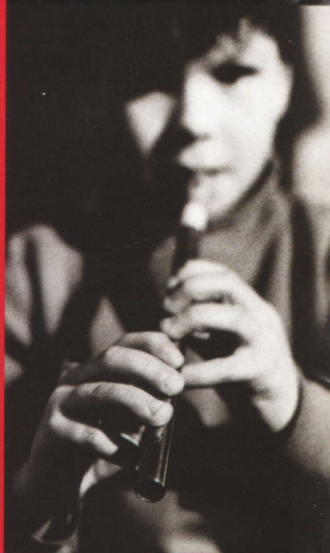
Janáček visited Russia three times and developed an interest in Russian language and literature. Works arising from this interest include the opera *Katya Kabanova* and the orchestral rhapsody *Taras Bulba* (1918). He also wrote a number of instrumental chamber works in which, as in his vocal works, he manipulates blocks of strong harmonies and repetitive melodies influenced by the contours of his native folk music. His use of elements of folk music and his attention to speech inflection mark him as a 20th-century counterpart of Mussorgsky. Although some influence of the French musical Impressionists appears in his later works, Janáček's style remained highly individual and original.





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BIOGRAPHIES

SARAH BOWERN (UK) Costume Designer

Sarah Bovern was born in Kent in 1970 and studied theatre set and costume design in London. *Katya Kabanova* marks her debut as Costume Designer for Opera Ireland, with which she has worked as Costume Supervisor since 1997. Other design credits include Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* for Stowe Opera; *The Crucible* for the Young Vic Studio; *A Lie of the Mind* for the Bridewell Theatre; and *Trafford Tanzy* for Barclay's Bank Theatre Trust (UK tour). Sarah Bovern's film credits include Costume Designer for *Like It Is*; *Saris and Trainers*; and *Prometheus* - all features for Film Four. She has also worked for various companies in the UK and Ireland as Assistant Designer and Costume Supervisor.

DEARBHLA COLLINS (Ireland) Répétiteur

Dearbhla Collins was born in Dublin and began piano studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music at the age of four. Her musical education has been with Dr John O'Connor at the RIAM, with Professor Georg Ebert at the Hochschule fur Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna, in Imola with Boris Petrushansky and in London with Norma Fisher. Now considered one of Ireland's foremost pianists, she won the piano section of the 1987 RTE Musician of the Future Competition and represented Ireland in the 1988 Eurovision Young Musician Competition in Amsterdam. She then went on to win prizes in international competitions in Europe and the USA and now performs frequently at home and abroad as soloist and chamber musician. In recent years she has performed in Japan as pianist of the Irish Piano Trio, in Portugal as part of Expo '98 and in St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. Dearbhla Collins has worked regularly as répétiteur for Opera Theatre Company.

CATHAL GARVEY (Ireland) Chorus Master

Cathal Garvey, whose work as chorus master for Opera Ireland's recent production of *Boris Godunov* was widely acclaimed, began violin and piano studies at the age of eight. He continued at the Cork School of Music and later read Music at UCC. He then spent two years studying at the College of Moscow Conservatory and, upon his return to Ireland, completed a Masters Degree in Conducting. He has also attended conducting masterclasses with Gerhard Markson and George Hurst. As a violinist and singer, Cathal Garvey has performed and toured extensively with the National Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra, the Irish Youth Choir and Madrigal '75. As a conductor he has worked with several choirs and orchestras in Cork and from 1997 was Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for Opera South in Cork, working on productions of *La Bohème* and *Il trovatore*. Last year he conducted Irish Operatic Repertory Company's successful run of Noël Gay's *Me and My Girl* at the Cork Opera House and Dublin's Olympia Theatre.



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BIOGRAPHIES

MARTIN HIGGINS Baritone (Ireland) Kuligin

Born in Dublin, Martin Higgins studied there with Veronica Dunne, in Sienna with Carlo Bergonzi and at the National Opera Studio in London. He has sung leading roles with Opera Ireland, RTÉ, Castleward Opera, Co-Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Chelsea Opera Group and Opera Europa at Holland Park, Stowe Opera, Opera Interludes and Scottish opera-Go-Round and at the Cottier and Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow. His repertoire includes Publio in *La clemenza di Tito*; Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*; Sid in *Albert Herring*; Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Germont, the d'Obigny and Douphol in *La traviata*; Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*; Silvio in *Pagliacci*; Bernadino in *Benvenuto Cellini*; Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Figaro and Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; Escamillo in *Carmen*; Robert Harley in Wilson's *A Passionate Man*; and the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. He also has wide experience of operetta and has sung frequently in recital and oratorio.

JANICE MEYERSON Mezzo-Soprano (USA) Kabanicha

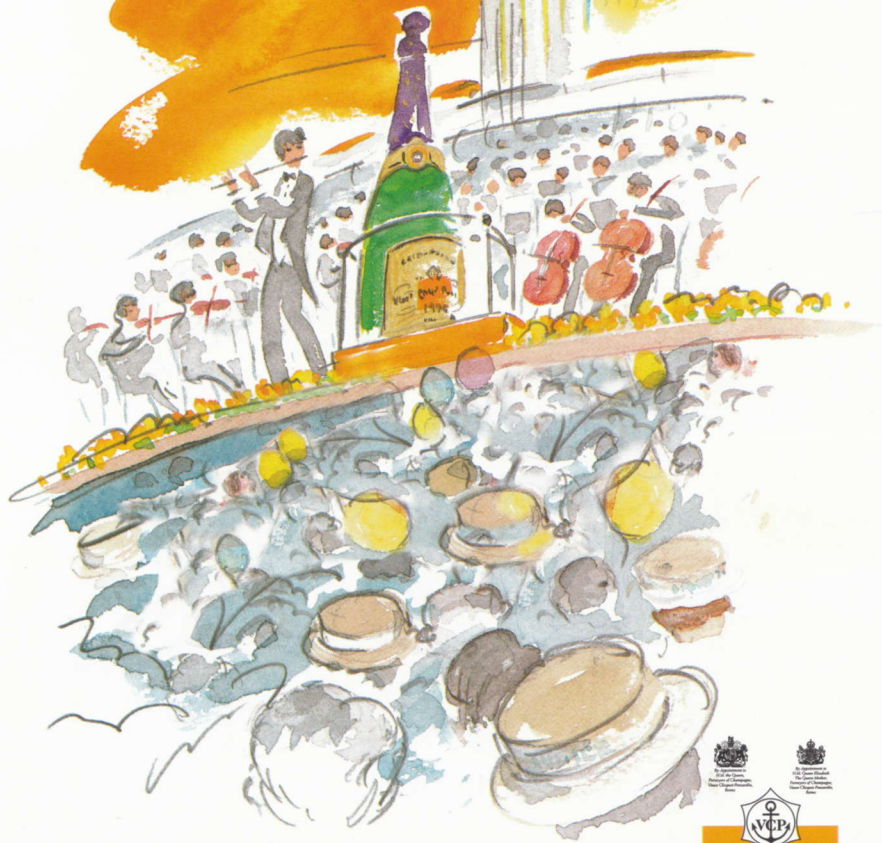
Janice Meyerson made her debut as Wagner's Brangäne with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein. She has since sung with the Deutsche Opera Berlin, the Frankfurt Opera, at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the New York City Opera, the Spoleto Festival, the Washington Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, L'Opéra de Montreal and the Opera Theater of St Louis in such roles as Carmen, Kostelnika in *Jenufa*, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Amneris in *Aida*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Herodias in *Salome* and Eboli in *Don Carlos*. Janice Meyerson's concert credits include performances with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the National Symphony, and at the Marlboro, Aspen and Tanglewood festivals under such eminent conductors as Seiji Ozawa, Rafael Kubelik and Sir Charles Mackerras. She recently sang the role of Adriano in Wagner's *Rienzi* at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall.

FIONA MURPHY Mezzo-soprano (Ireland) Glasha

Dublin-born Fiona Murphy commenced her vocal training with Irene Thompson. She graduated from UCD in 1998 with an Honours BA in Music and English. Highly successful in competitive singing, she has won numerous awards in musical festivals around Ireland. She has a busy concert schedule and is a regular soloist at the National Concert Hall in Dublin. She was chosen by the Bank of Ireland-sponsored Vocal Heritage Society as its first debutante recitalist. While continuing her studies with her teacher, Fiona Murphy has taken part in several masterclasses, including the inaugural Opera Ireland masterclass under Regina Nathan at University College Limerick last summer. She has also participated in masterclasses given by Stuart Burrows and Bernadette Greevy. She was a member of the Opera Ireland Chorus which received high praise for its performance in last December's production of *Boris Godunov* and is delighted to be making her solo debut with the company in *Katya Kabanova*.



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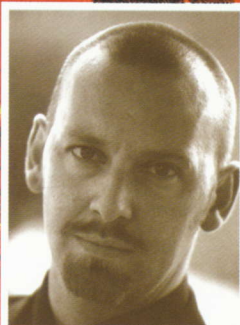
PAULA MURRIHY Soprano (Ireland) Feklusha

Paula Murrihy, from Tralee, is currently studying for a B. Mus performance degree at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama in Dublin, where she studies voice with Anne-Marie O'Sullivan and répétiteur Mairéad Hurley. A frequent oratorio soloist, her repertoire includes Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Schubert's *Mass in A flat*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*. She also enjoys recital work and has recorded for FM3 and Lyric FM. Last August she made her operatic debut as Miranda in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* on the island of Ischia, Naples, where she was one of ten singers selected to participate in the Walton Foundation masterclasses. Paula Murrihy has won numerous bursaries and is a multiple prize-winner at feiseanna throughout the country. Her most notable achievement to date, however, was winning the Dame Joan Sutherland award for Most Promising Young Singer at the 1999 ESB Veronica Dunne Competition. Future plans include Bach's *St John Passion* and the Mozart *Requiem* with the RTÉCO.



ANTHONY NORTON (UK) Assistant Director


Anthony Norton studied piano, conducting and voice at Trinity College London. He made his debut as a soloist at La Scala in Weber's *Oberon*, followed by numerous appearances in opera houses and festivals throughout Europe. Since moving to Dublin he has performed with Opera Ireland, Wexford Festival, Co-Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Lyric Opera and the National Symphony Orchestra. He has also broadcast on RTÉ and Lyric FM. Anthony Norton is Director of the newly-formed Teach Lán Theatre Company and also the Drawing Room Opera Company. He teaches the advanced vocal studies course at Walton's School of Music with Andrew Synnott and is Associate Conductor of the Wexford Sinfonia.



GERARD O'CONNOR Bass (Ireland) Dikoy

Gerard O'Connor was the first recipient of the Guinness Bursary at the National Opera Studio in London and thereafter he has sung with Singapore Lyric Opera, Opera Ireland, Opera Northern Ireland, Castletown Opera, Chelsea Opera, Holland Park opera and at the Covent Garden and Wexford Festivals in repertoire including *Iris*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Curlew River*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Rigoletto* and both Rossini's and Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. For Opera Ireland he has sung Colline (*La Bobème*), Pistol (*Falstaff*), Baron Zeta (*Merry Widow*), Antonio (*Figaro*), Frank (*Fledermaus*), the Bonze (*Madama Butterfly*), Fifth Jew (*Salome*) and Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*). He created the role of St John in the world premiere of James Wilson's *A Passionate Man* in Dublin and Mamiöv in the European premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress*. He has also toured Belgium and Holland as Osmin in OTC's production of Mozart's *Zaide*. Engagements in 2000 include King Mark in *Tristan und Isolde* for Camberwell Pocket Opera and Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore* for OTC.





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SOPHIE PONDJICLIS Mezzo-soprano (France) Varvara

Sophie Pondjiclis, winner of the 27th Toti dal Monte competition in Treviso, has sung with some of the world's finest conductors: including Chung in Florence and at the Paris Bastille; Muti at La Scala; Baudó at the Bastille and in Marseilles; Mund in Las Palmas; Metzmacher in Hamburg; and Darlington at the Palais Garnier. She has also sung in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* under Robertson at the Châtelet and under Janowski with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio France. A versatile artist, Sophie Pondjiclis frequently performs contemporary music; she sang the title role in *Esther de Carpentras* in celebration of the Darius Milhaud centennial. She is also much sought after as a recitalist and has performed at La Scala, the Châtelet, Studio Bastille, the National Theatre of Mannheim, the Villa Medici in Rome, and so on. In 1996 she recorded Theodore Gouvy's *Stabat Mater* for the K617 label. Recent new roles include Carmen, Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* and Rossini's Rosina (for the first time in Italian) at Cosenza.

JAMES ROBINSON (USA) Director

James Robinson is pleased to return to Opera Ireland where he previously directed the critically acclaimed production of *Eugene Onegin* in 1997. Recently, he has directed Handel's *Rinaldo* for Sydney Opera House and the Melbourne Arts Centre; *Norma* and *Elektra* for Canadian Opera in Toronto; *Il viaggio a Reims* for New York City Opera; and *Hansel and Gretel* in Los Angeles. Additionally, his work has been seen at the Santa Fe Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, Minnesota Opera, the Wolf Trap Festival in Washington DC and Chicago's Court Theatre: and his production of *Turandot* has been mounted by more than twenty companies in the USA and Canada. Upcoming projects include Handel's *Radamisto* for Opera Theatre of St Louis; *La Bohème* for New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera; and *Norma* and the world premiere of *The Caribbean Wedding* for Houston Grand Opera.

WILLIAM SAETRE Tenor (USA) Kudryash

William Saetre, who returns to Opera Ireland following his acclaimed Simpleton in *Boris Godunov* last November, has also sung Dr Caius in *Falstaff* and First Jew in *Salome* with the company. The Norwegian-American tenor studied in San Francisco and New York and made his operatic debut as the Witch in Humperdink's *Hänsel und Gretel*. The role of Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* brought him to Europe in 1990, where he has continued to sing in opera houses in Paris, Vienna and Amsterdam amongst others. During 1993/94 he sang both Basilio and Curzio in *Figaro* at the Mozart Festival in Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace. In recent seasons he has appeared in Britten's *Billy Budd* in Houston and Seattle, where he also sang Bardolfo and Spoletta, as well as in Dallas, where he also sang in *Die Zauberflöte*. Last year he made debut appearances in Frankfurt and Prague. Future venues include New York, Houston, Boston and Dallas (*Der Narr in Wozzeck*). William Saetre presently resides in Hamburg, Germany.



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BRUNO SCHWENGL (Austria) Set Designer

Bruno Schwengl was educated as a graphic artist and a theatrical set and costume designer. He works internationally in opera and ballet. In Ireland he has worked at Wexford Festival (*Cherevichki* and *Das Liebesverbot*), with Storey Tellers and at Dublin's Gate Theatre, for which his designs have included *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *As You Like It*. For Opera Ireland he designed *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Martba*, *Così fan tutte*, *Macbeth*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Merry Widow* and *Cavalleria rusticana* & *Pagliacci*.

ADAM SILVERMAN (USA) Lighting Designer

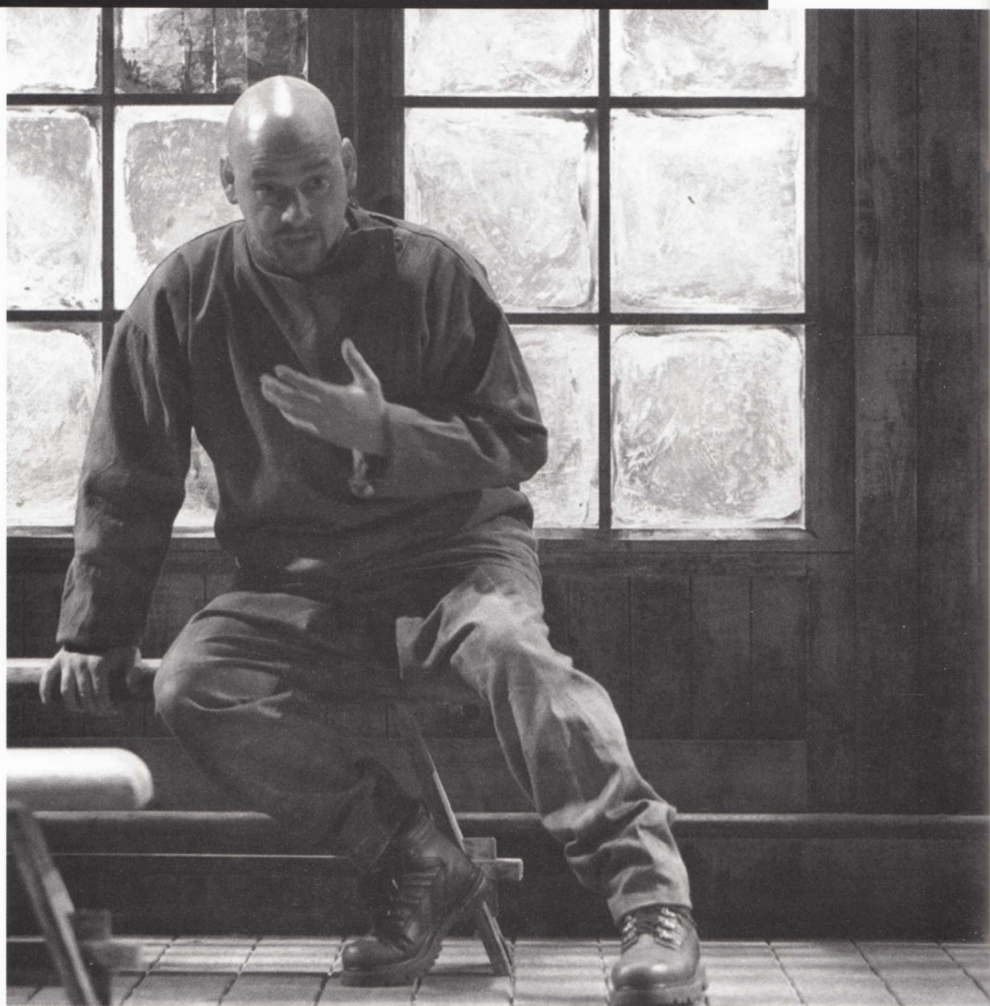
Adam Silverman's opera credits include *Macbeth*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus* and *Cav&Pag* for Opera Ireland; *Giasone* directed by David Alden at Spoleto Festival, USA; *La traviata* directed by Christopher Alden for New Israeli Opera; *Der Rosenkavalier* directed by Kaegi in Seattle; *Faust* at Welsh National Opera; *L'etoile* at Opera Zuid, the Netherlands; *Il turco in Italia*, *Boris Godunov*, *House of the Dead* and *Wozzeck* for Long Beach Opera; *La colombe* for L'Opéra Français de New York; *Il re pastore* and *Lucia* for Boston Lyric Opera. Adam Silverman's theatre credits include *Bartholomew Fair* for the Royal Shakespeare Company; *As You Like It* for Shakespeare Theatre Washington; Lawrence Boswell's production of *Beauty and the Beast* and David Lan's *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore* at London's Young Vic; *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* directed by Alan Stanford at Dublin's Gate Theatre; Elane May and Alan Arkin's *Power Plays* (Promenade, NY) and *Cider House Rules* (Atlantic, NY).

LEO MARIAN VODIČKA Tenor (Czech Republic) Boris

Leo Marian Vodička was born in Brno where he studied at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts with Josef Valka. Early in his career he sang with opera companies in Ceske Budejovice, Olomouc, Brno and Prague as well as making guest appearances in Vienna and other European cities. He visited Japan and Taiwan with the company of the National Opera Prague in 1990, '91 and '92. He has been a freelance artist since 1991. In addition to the main Italian lyric and spinto roles, he sings the tenor roles of Smetana and Dvořák, being particularly renowned for his portrayal of the latter's Dalibor, which he recorded for Supraphon in 1995 and sang at Edinburgh Festival (under Armstrong and Pountney) in 1998. Coming from Brno, Leo Marian Vodička has specialised in the major tenor roles of Janáček as well as the concert piece *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* (including London's Barbican in 1993) and the *Glagolitic Mass*. Other composers in his concert repertoire include Bartók, Beethoven, Martinu, Reger, Szymanowski and Lloyd Webber.

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BIOGRAPHIES

VOLKER VOGEL Tenor (Germany) Tikhon

Born in Karlsruhe, he studied singing in Hanover but broke off in 1975 to work in direction. In 1977 he went to Hildesheim as assistant, then director, singer and actor and has since held singing appointments in Dortmund, Freiburg and Vienna (premiere of von Einem's *Tulifant* in 1990). A member of Zürich Opera since 1991, he has also appeared in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Bastille; *Fidelio* in Munich; *Zauberflöte* and *Poppea* at Salzburg Festival; Melot in at the re-opening of the Munich's Prince Regent Theatre in 1996; *Falstaff* and *Rheingold* in Hamburg and Spain. He has also sung in Italy, Ireland, the UK and the USA and in concert under Solti at La Scala. Other roles include Herod and Shuisky (both heard in Dublin) and the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*. In concert he has sung with Dohnányi at Cleveland, London and Salzburg; and in Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* in Oslo. He will sing Mime in Wagner's *Ring* under Welser-Möst and Wilson in Zürich in 2000-02 and direct Kálmán's *Die Czardasfürstin* in Ulm in April 2002.

LAURENT WAGNER (France) Conductor

Laurent Wagner, who conducted Opera Ireland's acclaimed *Salome* last year, was born in Lyon, where he began his musical studies in piano, bassoon, harmony and chamber music. In 1982 he joined the Kapellmeister class of Professor Österreicher in Vienna. After several years as Kapellmeister at various German opera houses he was appointed General Music Director of the Saar State Opera in Saarbrücken, where he programmed and performed interesting works such as Messiaen's *Turangalila* Symphony, Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* and Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, as well as his complete orchestral works. His main interests are the German symphonic repertoire and German and Italian opera. Laurent Wagner has appeared as guest conductor in Basel, Graz, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Tallin, Osnabrück, Munich and at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, as well as in Italy, Tokyo, Begin and Sao Paulo. In August 1998 he took up the post of Opera Director in St Gallen and he has also conducted this season in Verona, Cosenza, Freiburg, Schwerin and Nantes.

FRANZITA WHELAN Soprano (Ireland) Katya

Born in Portlaoise, Franzita Whelan studied with Matt Smolenski at the RIAM, then on scholarship at London's Royal College of Music and at the National Opera Studio, supported by ENO. The recipient of many awards and prizes, she is now a Fellow of the Royal College of Music. She has recently sung Pamina and Elvira for Welsh National Opera. In concert she has performed Verdi's *Requiem* with Willcocks at the Royal Albert Hall, toured in *Music for Middlebrows* with Proinnsias Ó Duinn and the RTÉCO, and created Philip Martin's *Music for the Millennium* at the NCH in Dublin. In recital, she has appeared at London's Wigmore Hall, the Chester Summer Music Festival and the NCH. Later this season she will perform the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Garsington Opera, sing *Songs of the Auvergne* with the NSOI at the NCH and return to Japan for performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Paulus* in Tokyo. Next season she will tour with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's *Viennese Concert*.



THE NATIONAL CHAMBER CHOIR

The *National Chamber Choir*, which forms the core of Opera Ireland's Chorus, is one of Ireland's premier chamber music ensembles. The Choir gives upwards of 60 live performances annually. Founded in 1991 it is made up of 17, highly motivated, professional singers. When not working as an opera chorus the NCC, working from its base in Dublin City University, is employed all year round in both entertainment and education, giving concerts and education workshops in Dublin and throughout the country.

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

27 & 28 April: Cork International Choral Festival

The National Chamber Choir will be Choir in Residence at the International Choral Festival in Cork where it will premiere works by Ian Wilson and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin.

1 June: The Shaw Room, The National Gallery of Ireland, 6.30 pm *Composers Under the Influence*

The first concert in the NCC's summer series in the NGI – this concert features composer David Fennessy and composers that have influenced his choral writing.

7-16 June: Italian Tour

Seven concerts in and around the Italian town of Legnano.

Information on any of the above from Tel: 01-7045665
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Shostakovich: Symphony No. 8

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Friday 12th May

Walton: Portsmouth Point

Bartók: Piano Concerto No. 2

Brahms: Symphony No. 4

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Nicholas Cleobury, *conductor*

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Dates indicate the first and most recent productions.

Salvatore Allegra		Christoph W Gluck		Licinio Refice	
Ave Maria	1959	Orfeo ed Euridice	1960, 1986	Cecilia	1954
Il medico suo malgrado	1962			Gioacchino Rossini	
		Charles Gounod		Il barbiere di Siviglia	1942, 1999
Michael W Balfe		Faust	1941, 1995	La Cenerentola	1972, 1995
The Bohemian Girl	1943	Roméo et Juliette	1945	L'italiana in Algeri	1978, 1992
Ludwig van Beethoven		George F Handel		Camille Saint-Saëns	
Fidelio	1954, 1994	Messiah	1942	Samson et Dalila	1942, 1979
Vincenzo Bellini		Engelbert Humperdinck		Bedřich Smetana	
La sonnambula	1960, 1963	Hänsel und Gretel	1943, 1994	The Bartered Bride	1953, 1976
Norma	1955, 1989				
I puritani	1975	Leoš Janáček		Johann Strauss	
		Jenufa	1973	Die Fledermaus	1962, 1998
		Katya Kabanova	2000	Der Zigeunerbaron	1964
Benjamin Britten					
Peter Grimes	1990	Franz Lehár		Richard Strauss	
		The Merry Widow	1997	Der Rosenkavalier	1964, 1984
Georges Bizet				Salome	1999
Carmen	1941, 1989	Ruggiero Leoncavallo			
Les pêcheurs de perles	1964, 1987	Pagliacci	1941, 1998		
				Ambroise Thomas	
Gustave Charpentier		Pietro Mascagni		Mignon	1966, 1973
Louise	1979	L'amico Fritz	1952		
		Cavalleria rusticana	1941, 1998	Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky	
Francesco Cilea				Eugene Onegin	1969, 1997
Adriana Lecouvreur	1967, 1980	Jules Massenet		The Queen of Spades	1972
		Manon	1952, 1980		
Domenico Cimarosa		Werther	1967, 1977	Giuseppe Verdi	
Il matrimonio segreto	1961			Aida	1942, 2000
		Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		Un ballo in maschera	1949, 1992
Claude Debussy		Così fan tutte	1950, 1993	Don Carlos	1950, 1985
Pelléas et Mélisande	1948	Don Giovanni	1943, 1995	Ernani	1965, 1978
		Idomeneo	1956	Falstaff	1960, 1998
Léo Delibes		Die Entführung aus dem Serail	1949, 1964	La forza del destino	1951, 1973
Lakmé	1993	Le nozze di Figaro	1942, 1997	Macbeth	1963, 1997
		Die Zauberflöte	1990, 1996	Nabucco	1962, 1986
Gaetano Donizetti				Otello	1946, 1981
Don Pasquale	1952, 1987	Modest Mussorgsky		Rigoletto	1941, 1994
L'elisir d'amore	1958, 1996	Boris Godunov	1999	Simon Boccanegra	1956, 1974
La favorita	1942, 1982			La traviata	1941, 1999
La figlia del reggimento	1978	Jacques Offenbach		Il trovatore	1941, 1995
Lucia di Lammermoor	1955, 1991	Les contes d'Hoffmann	1945, 1998		
				Gerard Victory	
Friedrich von Flotow		Amilcare Ponchielli		Music Hath Mischief	1968
Martha	1982, 1992	La Gioconda	1944, 1984		
				Richard Wagner	
Umberto Giordano		Giacomo Puccini		Der fliegende Holländer	1946, 1964
Andrea Chénier	1957, 1983	La Bohème	1941, 1996	Lohengrin	1971, 1983
Fedora	1959	Gianni Schicchi	1962	Tannhäuser	1943, 1977
		Madama Butterfly	1942, 1993	Tristan und Isolde	1953, 1963
		Manon Lescaut	1958, 1991	Die Walküre	1956
		Suor Angelica	1962		
		Tosca	1941, 1996		
		Turandot	1957, 1986	Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari	
				Il segreto di Susanna	1956



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